REGISTERED NO. L. 89

THE NUR AFSHAN

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY.

Vol. XII LUDHIANA:—June 5th, 1908. No. 23

EDITORIAL NOTES.

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

St. Mathew.

The death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, of Qadian, removes from the scenes of earth a man who for more than a quarter of a century has claimed a prominent place in the religious life of the Province. For a long time he claimed to be the promised *Mahdi* of Islam, but later on he enlarged the claim by declaring himself to be "the *Mahdi Messiah*" of the Twentieth century. He was persistent in denying the orthodox doctrine of a "bloody mahdi" and "bloody Messiah," to appear in the last times to save Muslims from their enemies. As *Mehdi Massiah*—in one person—the Mirza denied the orthodox teaching of *Jihad* or crusade for the defence and propagation of Islam. He claimed to be a man and a prophet of peace, and posed as a loyal supporter of the English Government. In a memorial to Sir William Mackworth Young, March 5th 1898, he he says, "To believe in me as *the promised Messiah and Mahdi* is to disbelieve in the popular doctrine of *Jehad*." More recently his claim to be the Messiah of the 20th century seems to have superceded the original claim to be the Mahdi. Sometimes he seemed to claim to be the Jesus of the Quran and therefore the Messiah who is to come in the last times. At other times he explained that he had ocme in "the spirit and power" of the Messiah, just as John the Baptist came in spirit and power of Elijah. The impossibility of maintaining even an appearance of identity with the pure and holy Jesus, obliged him to adopt the dual doctrine of the Messiah. This led to the rejection of the Jesus of the New Testament as the Messiah of Islam. He (Jesus) was a prophet, who was persecuted and eventually crucified, but not unto death. He was only in a swoon when taken from the cross and from this he was restored and then secretly conveyed away to a place of hiding, when he escaped, travelling east into India and eventually dying in Cashmere, where his tomb may be seen at the present time! The real Messiah according to the Mirza, seems to be almost, if not altogether, identical with the Spirit of the Imáms, which from time to time becomes incarnate on earth. This in the real *Mahdi* and appears to lead the faithful in the crises of history. In this view of the case his claim was very like that of the Persian Babs or Baháies.

More recently he enlarged upon this doctrine and claimed that the Spirit incarnate in the Hindu Krishna was now incarnate in himself and he set out upon a bold endeavour to reconcile Hindus and Muslims by the faith of a common Mehdi Messiahship which would bring all men into the one body of the Ahmadya.

Like the claims of the false prophet of Zion city near Chicago, U.S., America, the career of Ghulam Ahmad, of Qadian, has suddenly ended under the power of death. His followers under the leadership of Maulvi Nur-ud-din, like the Doweyites, may strive to perpetuate the religion of their dead prophet but the probability is that it will soon become a memory.

With all his peace-loving claims, no Muslim has ever uttered a tithe of the blasphemies which have characterized the writing of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed. He was bitterly against the Christians. His spirit of prophecy was ever ready to foretell the death of his opponents. So fierce was this that a special injunction of the courts became necessary to set bounds to its exercise.

The rising up from time to time of men of the character of the Mirza in Muslim lands has led to much trouble in the past. The peaceful role of Mirza Ghulam saved the day.

Many Muslims, who disliked his onslaught upon orthodox Islam, yet had a secret pride in a man who could say so much against the Christians. These have come to believe that the Christians could not meet his objections. But the Christians have long looked on him as a man so bigoted and so unreasonable as to justify their ignoring him altogether. He revelled in popular applause. He never replied fairly to the arguments of his opponents. His favourite scheme was first to express kindly compassion for the crass ignorance of his opponent and then raising a new issue or reviving some old objection, he would pour forth his eloquence all the while ignoring the real issue.

The Report of the Punjab Sunday School Union has been very neatly printed at the Ludhiana Mission Press. The facts brought to light at the Convention held in Gujranwalla, March 10th and 11, show very substantive progress. The number of Sunday Schools at the end of 1907 was 583 with 776 teachers and 20,183 scholars and teachers, or pupils only the number was 19,957. The languages used are English, Urdu, Punjabi